

Gladiator Games

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Summary: In a world much different than their own, the Shepard Siblings and Kaidan must be careful, as it isn't only their lives they're playing with. AU, No Reapers. Warnings and Disclaimers inside. Slow burn.

Gladiator Games

****WARNING:** This story contains massive amounts of sexual content. Some of it is violent yet consensual, I realize that isn't everyone's cup of tea. There is mention of non-consensual acts, but no explicit scenes. There are also depictions of violent actions, mentions of physical abuse, and fighting in an arena to the death. Trigger/Squick-out warnings have been issued. ******

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><p>The one thing Edgar Shepard liked doing for his master was shopping. Waking up early and going down to the markets to look at all the strange fruits and vegetables thrilled him. Even though he was a slave he was allowed to run about the market freely. There were plenty of guards, and he was properly coded. A bright blue star encased in a circle sewn into his clothing let the guards know who he belonged to, and what sort of slave he was. The star was Master Helix's personal symbol, it was a simple four point star. The circle let the guards know that he was a gladiator, the most valuable slave a master can own.<p>

His gladiator status allowed him certain privileges, like his own room, the best healthcare a slave can have, and a trainer that kept him in top shape. On certain planets, he was allowed to carry guns for his own protection. He didn't even have to wear a collar around

his neck like some slaves. His favorite perk was the bath-maidens.

This particular trip to the markets was a reward for a job well done last night. His fight, as usual, was the last one of the night, and the most violent. After seemingly endless rounds of brutality, you had to 'amp up the blood factor' as Master Helix put it. This was so it would stick in the peoples' mind long after it was over. He was good at that sort of thing. Master Helix credited his ability to withstand massive amounts of punishment. She told him that what he lacked in intelligence, he made up for in brute strength.

Of course, last night's fight wasn't the real reason he was here. If Master Helix had so desired, she would have just given him the usual reward, two days' reprieve and a trip to the bathhouses. She could have sent someone else to the markets. Today was a special day. Today, the master's name might be on the Fighter's Wall.

The Fighter's Wall was a section of wall used to spread information about fights on Adek. What fights were taking place where, who was participating in them, and who won. The biggest announcement, however, the one Shepard had been sent to check, was about the contender for the Galactic Gladiatorial Games.

The Games took place on the Citadel. Species from all over the galaxy came to fight and win not only large sums of money, but honor and recognition. Those who won the Games often became famous. It was one of Master Helix's dreams to win at least one game, and Master Helix's dreams were Shepard's dreams.

The Games hosted a surprise team from Batarian space each year as a sign of goodwill between the cool relations between governments. The Batarian Hegemony themselves often rotated which planets on the roster would be the planet to host the winning team, this year, it had been Adek. The team that won would be flown to the Citadel and hosted by the Council, all expenses paid for, no matter how large the bill was.

It had taken months for Helix to even be considered a candidate. While many aliens made a living in Batarian space, Helix was the only human. Many in the Batarian Hegemony didn't welcome her, even though she was the richest slave trader they had seen in centuries. Countless back-alley brawls leading to the death of Helix's gladiators one by one had forced her to consider a new strategy. Edgar and one other had been the only two to survive so far. Not willing to take anymore losses, Helix capitalized on her misfortunes. She began a campaign, touring Edgar and his teammate all around Adek. She challenged anyone who would listen to a fight. Her two fighters against a team of five, winner take all. Whether it was one on one or a battle royale, she had always come out on top. One time, Edgar had been decommissioned from fighting entirely, and his teammate had to carry Helix to victory. Her notoriety rose, and soon, plenty of people were chanting her name, rooting for her. Even Batarians liked impossible odds.

He didn't think about that now, instead, he wandered through the stalls slowly, taking his time, looking at everything he pleased. This was the only time he was allowed to openly gawk at the strange things around him. He was allowed to touch rich fabrics, and sample the sweetest fruits, he could even buy a girl or two, if he wanted,

for a cheap price and ten minutes in a small, hastily made shack. He was allowed, hell he had been encouraged, to talk to the patrons of the stalls, to haggle and bargain prices. He was good at intimidating the merchants, especially now that his tour was done. The best part was, if he was able to save enough money, he could go into one of the small eateries and order anything off the menu.

These were luxuries not many slaves were privy to. Offering slaves small rewards such as going to the market, or not beating them for the slightest aggravations, allowing slaves to take entire days off to rest were only some of the radical things Helix did that separated her from other slavers. This practice, along with her status as a human, made it hard for Helix to socially climb the ranks. However, Helix was a ruthless woman, known for the way she outmaneuvered her betters. Now she owned half of Adek, and thanks to the grueling tour schedule, the other half was entirely too afraid to cross her. There was even talk that Helix would soon represent Adek in the Batarian Hegemony.

Shepard never really paid attention to the politics. All he knew was that he liked being Master Helix's slave. He been the slave to others before Helix, and had nearly died on more than one occasion. Helix, in her infinite kindness, had removed the tracking ship all slaves were forced to have, and had done it with relative ease. She allowed him certain luxuries he'd never had before, such as a varied diet, and even a shirt he was allowed to wear and call his own. She rarely beat him.

That didn't mean she didn't have a temper. She did beat slaves if they caught her on a bad day. More than once she had whipped a weaker slave to death. Indentured servants weren't even safe from her wrath. Even though the indentured servants had contracts attached to their services, the ones Helix killed on accident were simple footnotes in her mind. She simply paid the Death Fee and moved on.

After he'd visited every stall and picked up the things Master Helix wanted, he had some extra credits to spend. He made his way to Veetor's Caf  . Veetor was a nervous quarian under the protection of Master Helix. He paid her a certain amount of his wages, and she 'protected' his rights as a free man. Because of this, all Helix's people, even her slaves, ate at an outrageously low discount on already cheap food. This was a good thing, because even now he'd have some creds leftover, and that was sure to please Master Helix.

He walked into the small Caf  , mouth already watering at the smell of baked goods and coffee. "Edgar!" He heard Veetor call. Edgar nodded to the masked owner. "Good job in the fight last night."

"Thanks Veetor." Shepard said sitting at his usual table. "Same thing as always Veetor." Shepard commented. Because Veetor was a quarian and distrust of quarians were universal, Veetor's place didn't get much business, not even during market days. The caf   was always quiet with a good view of passersby no matter where you sat. It was dimly lit, the floor made of hard, packed earth. The tables could only sit one or two people, but the food was decent and the nearly always emptiness of the caf   was preferable to the louder ones.

Shepard didn't have to wait long before his treat came out. It was a

simple bowl of gruel, Veetor called it 'oatmeal'. Apparently, it was a grain most humans ate for breakfast. All Shepard knew was it was cheap and filled him up quickly. Veetor had many different combinations of the gruel, some sweet, others savory. Shepard liked the one sweetened with sugar and milk, the bowl warmed him and was easy to get down. At this point, even though he wanted to savor every bite, he couldn't, he had to get to the Fighter's Wall.

He downed the bowl and walked up to the counter, handing it over to Veetor. "No charge today Shepard. Master Helix's orders." The human nodded, said his thanks, and walked out. Getting to the Fighter's Wall was easy. He just went all the way down the main street of the market. It used to be called the News Wall, because that's where all the news had been reported, but since fighting had taken over Adek, the name was changed.

Shepard scanned the list of people going to the Citadel. He didn't really know how to read, but he knew the characters that spelled 'Citadel', 'Shepard', and 'Helix'. He was aware of the fact that the only reason those three words would be put together in something called a sentence was because they'd won the trip to the Citadel. It took him twenty minutes, but eventually he found them. He took the paper from the wall as proof and made his way towards the closest gate.

When he showed the guard his ID number, transport was arranged for him. This was another luxury Master Helix allowed her slaves. Many of the slaves that came to the markets had to walk from their master's houses, sometimes it took days. But Master Helix always arranged transport for her slaves, saving them the trouble and her a headache in case something went wrong. The shuttle came quickly enough and he stepped inside with all the bags of goodies Master Helix wanted him to get. The driver said nothing as he entered, he simply zoomed off, trying to get Shepard to his house as quickly as possible.

Edgar had been many places, but Adek was unlike any other. It was a hot planet, and wet. He had once overheard Master talking about the greenhouse gases, or something to that effect, as the reason it was so hot. The atmosphere trapped all the moisture from the plants and the heat that made it through from the sun. He didn't understand it really. All he knew was that every time he stepped outside, he couldn't really be sure if the moisture that clung to him was his own sweat or the humidity.

As the driver zoomed past all the trees, or what Edgar assumed were trees, he felt a mounting excitement. He was really going to the Citadel. He had no clue what this meant for him, but he had seen the Games on the vids before. It seemed like those who won received a lot of attention, from the press and from others. He liked the idea of attention. When Master Helix had toured him, people had come up to him and talked to him, they actually knew him by name now, and that was, in and of itself, the most exciting thing that ever happened to him. He could hardly wait to tell the master.

* * *

><p>The driver dropped Shepard off right in front of the house. It was three stories, and shaped like a rectangle. An uninspiring place, but it served its purpose well. Walking in the large front doors, Shepard placed the bags of goodies right next to the doorway. A

different slave would take them and put them away.<p>

The foyer was deceptively small. Only a large staircase that led to the Master's sitting room, and two doors, one on each side of the staircase, led to the rest of the house. Normally, Shepard would take the left door and go to his room immediately, or to the training grounds, but today, he took the stairs, two at a time.

The master spent most of her days in the sitting room, plotting new ways to make life miserable for those who opposed her. The doors were always close. He knocked and a servant answered. There was a fundamental difference between servants, indentured servants, and slaves. Slaves had to wear their master's symbol on them at all times, and then a second identifying symbol to let others know what that slave did specifically, like the circle around the master's star that indicated Shepard's status as a gladiator. They got little to no clothing, and weren't allowed to wear shoes. A great many of them had to wear collars.

Indentured servants didn't have it much better, as they were simply slaves on a timed contract. Also, they weren't owned by a slave master, just the company that leased them. For that reason, they had to wear three identifying marks. Their company's logo, the slave master's symbol, and the symbol that corresponded to their slave stations, they too wore collars.

Servants had the best gig of all. They didn't have to wear marks, they were allowed clothing and shoes, there were no collars, and, to top it all off, they were paid for their work. They even had a certain amount of social mobility. Shepard was envious of the servants. He'd much rather be a servant than a slave, then maybe he could buy his way out of servitude. He pushed those thoughts from his mind, he learned long ago it was dangerous to dream of a freedom that would never come.

"I have a message for Master Helix." Shepard said, looking at the floor, his bare feet grimy. Servants, even the indentured ones, were higher in standing than the slaves here, if you offended them, you often risked the wrath of your master. His master was no different. "Enter." The servant said after relaying the message. Shepard entered the room. "Well?" Helix asked, her voice excited. Shepard bowed low to greet her. He held the paper out for her and only straightened when she snatched it from his hands. A moment of silence, then a loud 'ha!' told him she was pleased. "You see this Faux?" Helix said, shoving the paper to the overseer. "I see it." The Batarian said. "God fucking damn!" Helix let out another bark of laughter. "Fuck me to tears!" She exclaimed once again. "Shepard you beautiful fuck we did it!" He felt Helix wrap her hands around his shoulders and shake him a little. He tensed in case she felt like hitting him in her euphoria. "We're going to the Citadel." He smiled, but didn't speak. She gave him one quick slap on the shoulder. "Go to the bathhouse, you've earned the rest of the day off. I'll have your surprise sent down to you in a moment." Shepard bowed again. "Yes Master." He muttered.

Shepard backed out of the room. Helix considered it an affront for slaves to show her their backside. So the awkward bowed position while doing a backward shuffle was something he had perfected a year ago. He straightened when the door closed and made his way back down the stairs. The bathhouses were outside, past the gardens. He had to

say this for Master Helix, she definitely kept up appearances. The masters he had before had large places to live, but nothing as pretty or ostentatious as Helix's place.

The garden was always well manicured. She liked entertaining her guests out there most, despite the heat. She said it had something to do with the fact that everyone who attended, the Batarians anyway, ran the risk of getting a severe bacterial infection. It was a way to control others on the planet. Serve them the best money had to offer while simultaneously threatening them with slow and painful deaths she couldn't exactly be held accountable for. It worked well considering no one invited to the master's parties really had the guts to decline her.

He liked the bathhouses. Mainly because that's where the bath-maidens, as Master Helix liked to call them, would rub his sore muscles. Sometimes, if the master had received a large amount of money from her fights, the bath-maidens would be instructed to use sweet smelling oils. Those were the days where they would perform sexual acts if he so desired. He would leave boneless. Feeling completely satisfied with his station in life. Another privilege he wasn't allowed in other houses. There were times when he woke in his room and wondered when this dream would be over. When would he finally outlive his usefulness to his master? He hoped that she would give him the job of training the new gladiators that came to work for her. That wasn't such a bad job. He'd still get benefits and he wouldn't have to work in mines until he dropped.

His worst fear had to be working the mines. There, they often ran through slaves like water. Little food or drink while working in harsh conditions with no safety equipment. There were horror stories of slaves going mad. Some opted for suicide rather than work in the mines. Some were so brainwashed that by the time they actually got to the mines they considered it their duty, their honor, to work there.

He pushed those thoughts from his mind as he entered the bath building. He went to the right immediately. He took his clothes off, placing them on a bench and walked into the shower. He rinsed the dirt from his body, it was yet another rule of the Master's. You weren't allowed to get into the actual baths until you were clean enough, something about filters and keeping the water clean for the others. He didn't really understand it, but then again, he didn't understand most things, he didn't need to, to keep the master happy.

He scrubbed at himself until he felt clean enough. He wondered if his present was a rubdown with oil. He felt his penis twitch in anticipation. Most of the time it meant the girl who rubbed him down would take his cock in hand and rub that until he came. If the woman showed interest, he'd return the favor, being as gentle as he could unless instructed otherwise. Sometimes a maiden would reject him entirely. He'd immediately back off, understanding that she was merely completing her duties and nothing more. He didn't blame them, masters often took what they wanted regardless of whether you did or didn't want them to. He resolved long ago not to be like that. Even entertaining the thought of taking someone by force made him feel queasy.

Grabbing his clothes he put it in a small container that had his name

on it. The little blue rectangle would be picked up and exchanged for a green one that would have a clean loincloth when he was ready to leave. He wasn't allowed a full set of clothing when in the master's house. Stepping into the slave portion of the bathhouse, which was slightly smaller than the ones used by Helix's visitors, he was surprised to see only one person there. She wasn't one of the usual girls either. She must've been new, but where were the others?

There were at least three bath-maidens in the bathhouse at all times. They always had chores to do, whether cleaning filters, changing water, even washing their clothing, or bathing themselves. Most of them were just trying to keep busy, waiting for the next guest that needed to be serviced. Coming here when the bathhouse was full was the best time to come in Shepard's opinion. The girls were hilarious during their off hours, often doing spot on, if over exaggerated, impressions of the guests. They also supplied the juiciest gossip. Which he could listen to for hours if he were allowed.

Even though the lights here were dim, and a great amount of steam was trapped in the enclosed space, Shepard could see that the girl was very pretty and very naked. Long blond hair, large breasts, large hips, as pale as Helix was. She was on her knees and a little jar in front of her. "Edgar Shepard?" She asked politely. "Yes." He said. She bowed to him. "The Master has instructed me to be your maiden." The girl explained. "I am Talia."

"Hello Talia." Shepard muttered. "Hello." She said back. This had never happened before. One maiden for him alone? Usually it was a bunch. He was skeptical that she be would able to achieve anything. He slipped into the water anyway. Talia slipped into the water with him and got started immediately. With firm, circular movement she worked his neck first, then his shoulders. It seems he had been blissfully wrong. When she got to his right calf muscle he flinched. "Injury?" She asked. "Yes." In fact, he had over-extended it in the arena last night. Talia said nothing further but began to rub the sore spot. He squirmed a little, but after about two minutes of pressure, her hands began to feel pleasurable. He lay his head back and let her work the rest of his lower limbs.

When she was done he looked up. "Do you wish anything extra of me?" She asked. He frowned, what else would he want? His penis twitched. He wanted her to use her hands on that particular area, but he never had to ask before. "No." He said. He figured if she wanted to touch it, she would have. She nodded and sat back on the bench next to him. He took a sidelong look at her. "Don't you have to leave?" He asked. Usually the bath-maidens left after they were done with him. Or they came over to another group to talk. "Would you like me to await you in your rooms?" He frowned. "Why would you go to my rooms?"

"I am your maiden." Shepard tried to figure out what that meant. He said, "Usually the bath-maidens have other activities they need to attend to."

"I am not a bath-maiden." This confused Shepard even more. "You said you were my maiden."

"I am."

"When the bath-maidens are done, they leave and do other things." Shepard said trying to explain. He was fearful for her. If she did

this in front of guests, she might get hit. He didn't want that. "I am not a bath-maiden." She insisted. He was starting to get frustrated with her. He was trying to help her out and she was being nothing but confusing. Just then, the doors opened with a loud bang. He turned to see Master Helix walk in. "Master." He said, rising from the water and bowing low. Talia did the same thing. "Well Shepard?" Helix asked. "Do you like her? Picked her out myself." Shepard didn't know how to respond, so he didn't. "Well? Is she even your type? Do you have a type? I was told she was the best gladiatorial healer ever to grace this fucking rock. Do you like men? I can get you a man if that's what you prefer."

"Master, I am confused." Shepard said. Helix let out a long sigh. "She's your maiden Shepard." Helix explained. "She's your personal attendant. She will do what you wish, when you wish it. She's," Helix paused. "She's your slave dumbass." She let out a short 'ha'. "I never thought I'd buy a slave for a slave. Mama always told me that a happy fighter was the best fighter. She's coming with us to the Citadel to make sure you stay strong and healthy enough to win me some big bucks."

"Yes Master. Thank you Master. I don't deserve this."

"Of course you don't!" Helix snapped. "I spent a great deal of creds on that stupid thing." Helix huffed. "Keep up the good work Shepard, I might just make you my head gladiator. You just may start making some money."

"Yes Master." Shepard mumbled. "And you girl," Helix said, addressing Talia. "You make sure that you teach Shepard what I told you. I don't need him flubbing his first public appearance in civilized society."

"Yes Master." Talia mumbled. "Well, have fun you two. We leave tomorrow Shepard, make sure you're up at dawn."

"Yes Master." He muttered. With that, Helix left the bathhouse. Shepard looked at Talia. His own personal Maiden? Only the best of servants got their own personal maidens. A slave having a maiden to themselves was unheard of. And the master was considering payment options for him? He wondered if that meant he'd be able to buy his freedom. Something else struck him as odd. "Talia,"

"Yes Shepard?"

"The games don't start for months, why are we going to the Citadel now?"

"It's the press circuit." When he frowned she sighed. "You really don't know much about the Triple G do you?"

"The Triple G?"

"The Galactic Gladiatorial Games?" She said it as if it were the most obvious thing in the world. "It's called the Triple G for people who don't want to say a mouthful. Months before the game actually begin, the competing teams, of which there are ten, go on a tour around the Citadel. They try to get sponsors and fans. The more fans you have, the more likely you are to receive a favorable rulings during the games."

"Rulings? Isn't it all just fighting?" Talia looked at him, mouth hanging open in disbelief. "You really are a moron aren't you?" She asked. "Don't tell Master Helix I called you that." She added quickly.

"I won't." He got out of the water, Talia following him. "Do you want me to oil you?" She asked, grabbing her jar. "No." He said. She followed him through the doorway. He grabbed his loincloth and put it on. She grabbed what seemed like nothing more than a sheet and pulled it over her head, wet hair making the fabric cling to her body wherever it touched. "You're rooms have been changed as well."

"Why?" Talia sighed. He followed her outside of the bathhouse. "It's called being rewarded. Master Helix believes rewards give her better results than punishment. She wants to win these games, and you're one half of the ticket that will do it."

"Victus is the other half right?"

"Yes." Talia led him up a flight of stairs. "He's getting the same treatment, so don't worry, it's not like you're special or anything." She stopped in front of a set of double doors. Not sure what to do, he knocked. Talia let out a sigh. "It's your room, you don't have to knock." He looked at her, unsure. She rolled her eyes and opened the doors for him.

His new room was bigger than he ever expected. Like the rest of Master Helix's house, the room was dimly lit. There were two beds. The larger one had a canopy over it. Its covers were a rich blue color, with swirling patterns. The smaller one was light pink, no canopy, and little more than a pillow and a blanket. A deliciously soft looking carpet was placed on the floor of what looked like a sitting area. It was circular, and on top of it stood a bookshelf, with actual books, two chairs facing the bookshelf, and a small table. It had a tapestry next to the shelves.

He saw a dresser with a vanity mounted atop it. Various bottles littered the top. He stepped further into the room. Blue curtains hung on the walls with the same swirled pattern as the big bed. He looked at Talia. "Is this room really for me?"

"It's for us." She said, settling her jar on the dresser. "The big bed is yours, the bathroom is over here." She walked to the left side of the room and pulled back a curtain. "See? Bathroom." She walked to the other side, near the bookcase. "This is the door that leads to Victus's room." She removed the tapestry depicting a particularly gruesome fight scene to reveal the door. She let it go. "There's a small balcony overlooking the garden." When she moved the curtains to reveal said balcony, the room was flooded with light. Shepard moved to look at the garden.

He had always taken side paths to get where he needed to go. Now that he looked down at the garden, he could see it was much bigger than he expected. Winding paths followed colorful bushes. He noticed it was color coded, red bushes made one square, blue made another, greens and purples were interspersed throughout. He didn't know what was considered beautiful, but at least the set up was pleasing to his eye. "These are my plants." She said, pointing to various pots placed

on the balcony. "Don't touch them."

They stood in the middle of the room, not sure what to do. Talia looked him over. "Well," She sighed, "I guess it's time for us to get started."

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><p>Reviews most welcome! This should be updated fairly regularly as it's simply sitting on my computer waiting to be reviewed one last time and published. I don't have any Beta Readers, so any errors, grammatical or otherwise are completely my own, and I apologize. Thank you for reading!

End
file.